



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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August 4, 2005

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THREE MORE BIRDS TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

Two of the Positive Birds Found in City Heights

County Vector Control officials announced today three more dead birds have tested positive for West Nile virus in San Diego County making a total of five birds testing positive this year. Two of the dead birds were blue jays found in City Heights on August 1 and 2, and the third bird was a great horned owl reported in Vista on July 25.

County Vector Control staff has been mobilized into the affected areas to treat known mosquito-breeding sites. In addition, public education efforts are being focused on the City Heights area.

"The public continues to be the eyes and ears for Vector Control. Testing of certain dead birds continues to be our best surveillance tool," says Gary Erbeck, director of the Department of Environmental Health. "If you find a crow, raven, jay, hawk or owl that has died within the last 24 hours, contact us at (888) 551-INFO (4636) so we can pick it up and test it for West Nile virus."

The public is encouraged to report dead birds if they meet the following criteria: they have been dead for less than 24 hours; do not have a foul odor; are not covered with ants or flies; are not stiff; and if their bodies are intact and have not been hit by a car, shot, or killed by animals.

Vector Control is using a new testing method for West Nile virus, called VecTest, which provides immediate test results, allowing a more rapid response to positive findings. The test can only be performed on crows, ravens and jays.

You can protect yourself from acquiring the virus by staying inside when mosquitoes are most active, wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors, especially at dawn or dusk. When you must be outside, use an insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Eucalyptus. These repellents are available at sporting goods, drug stores and discount retail stores. Keep screens on doors and windows in good repair. Residents can prevent mosquito breeding by eliminating standing water around the home. To control mosquito larvae, residents can stock decorative pools, poorly maintained swimming pools and ponds with free mosquito-eating fish provided by the County. The free fish are available at 14 locations countywide.

For more information on West Nile virus, dead bird reporting and how to obtain free mosquito fish, call the County's West Nile virus information line at 1-888-551-INFO (4636) or visit the official County West Nile virus Web site at www.SDFightTheBite.com. ###